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very nice
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how's your
vegetable
quotient?

THE MYRIAD SUPPLIES of canned and frozen vegetables found in today's food markets may confuse the average food buyer. And it's no wonder, for a multitude of brands, styles, seasonings, garnishes, and prices confront the shopper.

The following VQ (vegetable quotient) test, prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service, highlights many points helpful in making a wise choice from the shelf or frozen food counter.

questions

1 Vegetables that are canned and frozen are

- a. leftover fresh vegetables.
- b. grown especially for canning or freezing.
- c. grown in hothouses.

2 The least expensive styles of vegetables are

- a. French-style or julienne.

- b. whole vegetables.

- c. dices, short cuts, or pieces.

3 You can tell a canned or frozen vegetable is of high quality by its

- a. taste.
- b. appearance.
- c. price.
- d. all of these.

4 The term "U.S. Fancy" on a can or frozen package of vegetables refers to

- a. the style of the vegetable.
- b. its quality.
- c. the sauce it is packed in.
- d. the size of the can or package.

5 Bulging or swelling of a can indicates

- a. spoilage.
- b. the can was dropped.
- c. overpacking.

6 When buying frozen vegetables, you should make sure the package is

- a. wet.
- b. soft
- c. firm.

7 The U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture inspects all canned and frozen vegetables for wholesomeness.

- a. True.
- b. False.

8 Labels on canned and frozen vegetables are required by Federal law to show

- a. the number of servings.
- b. the grade and quality of the vegetable.

9 The contents listed on a can or frozen package of vegetables show

- a. the weight of the vegetable, including any liquid in the can or package.

b. the weight of the vegetable, not including any liquid.

- c. the volume of the cooked vegetable.

10 Most canned and frozen vegetables are packed and priced according to their quality.

- a. True.
- b. False.

answers

1 (b) Grown especially for canning or freezing. Because vegetables should be canned or frozen as soon as possible after harvest to retain their nutritional value and quality, canners and freezers usually contract to buy vegetables before they are planted. The vegetables are then delivered to the processing plant as soon as they are harvested, while they are at their best.

Some vegetable varieties have been developed especially for freezing or canning. Hothouse vegetables are usually sold as fresh vegetables.

2 (c) Dices, short cuts, or pieces. Whole vegetables usually cost more than cut styles, because it is hard to keep these fragile products whole during processing. French-style or julienne vegetables, which are sliced lengthwise, are more costly to process than other cut styles. Short cuts, dices, and pieces are least expensive, and a good buy for use in soups, stews, or souffles.

3 (d) All of these. Top-quality canned and frozen vegetables are the most tender and flavorful and most uniform in color and shape or size. They therefore usually cost more than lower qualities.

4 (b) Its quality. U.S. Fancy is another name for U.S. Grade A. U.S. Grades A, B, and C were established by USDA to describe different levels of quality in canned and frozen vegetables.

U.S. Grade A, top quality, is the kind of vegetable you'd probably serve at special meals.

U.S. Grade B (or Extra Standard) vegetables are of next highest quality; they look and taste almost as good as U.S. Grade A and are good for everyday meals or for use in casseroles or gelatin salads.

U.S. Grade C (or Standard) vegetables are more mature and not as

uniform in color and flavor as the higher grades. They are a thrifty buy for use in dishes where appearance of the vegetable is not important.

When the U.S. grade name is shown on a label, it means the vegetables have been officially graded by USDA.

5 (a) Spoilage. Don't buy or use cans that are bulged or swelling.

6 (c) Firm. Don't buy soft, limp, wet, or sweating packages; these are signs that the vegetables have defrosted or are in the process of defrosting. The vegetables may be safe to eat, but normally there will be a loss of quality.

7 (b) False. The U.S. Department of Agriculture does inspect canned and frozen vegetables for *quality*, upon request of processors, but assurance of the wholesomeness of these products is the responsibility of the Food and Drug Administration.

Inspection for quality (grading) is not required by law and processors must pay a fee for the service. Under USDA's continuous inspection program, an inspector is on duty in the processing plant at all times the plant is operating. In addition to checking the quality of the product, he checks the plant and equipment for cleanliness.

When vegetables are packed under continuous USDA inspection, the U.S. grade name may be shown on the can or package. The grade name and the statement, "Packed under continuous inspection of the U.S. Department of Agriculture," may also be shown within the USDA shield.



8 (c) The style of the vegetable. The grade of the vegetable, even if it has been packed under continuous USDA inspection, is not required to be shown. Federal law also does not require listing the number of servings, but if this is shown, the law requires that the label give the size of the servings in common measures, such as cups or ounces.

9 (a) The weight of the vegetable including any liquid in the can or package. Contents of canned and frozen vegetables are shown as net weight, not volume.

10 (a) True. Most processors and distributors have quality control programs, whether or not they use USDA's grading service, and pack vegetables in at least two grades. The higher grade commands a better price on the market. Some processors use a grade name such as "Fancy" without the "U.S." in front of it. Vegetables so labeled must meet the quality requirements of the U.S. grade.

Scoring

10 points for each correct answer.

80-100 Excellent. You know how to buy canned and frozen vegetables to suit your needs.

60-80 Good. You are a good shopper, but you would still benefit from the useful information in the C&MS booklet, "How to Buy Canned and Frozen Vegetables."

Below 60 Fair. Your buying habits could be improved. For some tips on how to make a wise choice in buying canned and frozen vegetables, write for the free booklet, "How to Buy Canned and Frozen Vegetables," G-167. Send your post card request to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250. Please include your ZIP code. □

Shopping Tips from the Experts

Consumers— do you know?

THOSE LAZY, HAZY, crazy days of summer can mean danger for your groceries unless you take extra precautions.

Select fresh meat and poultry, as well as frozen foods, just before leaving the store. Have the salesclerk package these items together, and get them home and into the refrigerator or freezer quickly.

Leaving these items in a warm car on a warm day invites trouble, U.S. Department of Agriculture meat and poultry inspectors warn. □

LEFTOVERS, properly stored, can be great warm-weather timesavers. Cover them tightly and refrigerate or freeze immediately. Whenever possible, put large quantities in several small containers rather than one large one, to speed cooling. And always be sure to use leftovers promptly!

A free booklet "Meat and Poultry—Care Tips for You," (G-174), contains more hints. Write: Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, for your copy. □

Plentiful Foods for August

ALWAYS POPULAR WHEAT products are featured on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Plentiful Foods List for August. The industry has also designated August as "Sandwich Month."

Other plentiful foods listed are summer vegetables, watermelons, fresh plums, peanuts and peanut products and, for Southeastern and Northeastern areas, canned grapefruit sections.

Latest report on wheat supplies places them at 1.2 million bushels. Sweet corn and tomatoes will be in seasonally large supply. The watermelon crop is greater than a year ago, and California's fresh plum crop 64% larger than last year.

Peanut production was a near record, and supplies of canned grapefruit sections on June 1 were largest in 3 years. □

WHAT DO YOU LOOK for when you buy Iceberg lettuce?

Laurence E. Ide, who is in charge of fresh fruit and vegetable standards for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service, says the first thing he looks for is a head with fresh, crisp green leaves.

Then he holds it in his hand and squeezes it slightly, to see if it's firm. If it gives a little, it's just right.

He doesn't want a head of Iceberg lettuce that's hard (one that won't give when squeezed slightly), because it may be over-ripe, with white instead of greenish-white leaves inside. Leaves like this may be difficult to separate from the head and they may not have normal taste.

A head with loose leaves (one that gives too much when squeezed) and that seems to feel light, may be of good quality, Mr. Ide explains, but it might not give enough lettuce for the money.

Mr. Ide is pretty particular about spots or any discoloration on lettuce, too. A little brown on the ribs of a few leaves, for instance, may not look like much, but it can spread quickly through the rest of the head. And he'd rather have Iceberg lettuce that keeps its quality when he gets it home. □

By David L. Smith

WHAT CAN YOU GET for peanuts nowadays? For one thing, you can get weekly reports on prices and supplies at shipping points and terminal markets from the Fruit and Vegetable Market News Service to help you decide where and when to buy and sell.

To peanut growers, shellers, brokers, wholesalers, salters, and manufacturers of peanut butter, candy, and other such products, peanuts aren't just peanuts. They never have been.

They're an important crop, ranking in farm value right along with apples. And if you check per capita consumption in the United States, you'll find it's close to 6 pounds a year and rising.

Peanut harvesting starts in Texas in July and lasts into November in the Virginia-Carolina area.

August and September are the biggest harvest months in the Southeast and Southwest production areas. Spanish peanuts, which are used in making candy and peanut butter and sold for salting, are grown mainly in the Southwest. The larger-kerneled Runner-type peanut, used mainly for

peanut butter, is the principal type grown in the Southeast, although this area produces Virginia and Spanish types as well.

Growers in Virginia and North Carolina begin harvest in mid-September of Virginia-type peanuts. These are generally sold for salting or for roasting in the shell as the "ball-park" peanut.

Harvest starts in October for New Mexico's Valencias, the only peanut with three or more kernels. Valencias are also roasted in the shell.

At harvesttime, the Peanut Market News Report, prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service, carries a summary of harvest conditions in all areas and the progress of movement of the crop from fields to shellers and storage.

Throughout the year, fruit and vegetable market news reporters gather information on sales and market conditions in all production areas and at major terminal markets.

The weekly peanut report, issued at Washington, carries their analyses of market conditions, a summary of

growers' and shellers' activities, arrivals at terminal markets, and prices for unshelled and shelled peanuts by variety, grade, and size. Prices are also given for peanut oil and meal and competitive oilseed meals.

What can you get for peanuts nowadays? The Peanut Market News report will tell you prices and give you a great deal of other marketing information about all kinds of peanuts. □

The author is Assistant Head, Market Reports Section, Market News Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, C&MS, USDA.

CORRECTION

In the May issue, there was an error in the story "Get Your Sweet Tooth a Date." The statement that "most domestic dates are grown in Southern California's Imperial Valley" was incorrect. It should have read that "most domestic dates are grown in Southern California's Coachella Valley." *Agricultural Marketing* regrets the error.

HOW EASY IT IS TO wheel a shopping cart down those aisles and select meats and poultry without thinking twice about the wholesomeness we're getting!

We've learned to expect it. The stamp of inspection by the U.S. Department of Agriculture helps assure it.

Yet we might not shop so confidently if it weren't for the large team of inspectors from USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service, who oversee sanitation, processing and labeling practices in federally inspected meat and poultry plants.

Before operations in a plant begin

By Dr. H. M. Steinmetz

for the day, a USDA inspector checks it to make sure it is sanitary. He repeats these checks periodically throughout the day, too—to see that equipment is cleaned as often as necessary and that products are being handled properly.

All livestock and poultry are inspected before slaughter, so that any with abnormalities which make them obviously unfit for human consumption can be condemned. This is carried out under the watchful eyes of Federal meat and poultry inspectors.

Slaughter operations, too, come under their surveillance, to make sure that correct sanitation practices are

followed. After slaughter, a post-mortem inspection takes place, with close examination of the internal organs and of the carcass, to determine whether the meat is sound and wholesome.

If a red-meat carcass passes this examination, it is stamped with the official "U.S. Inspected and Passed" seal. Cartons containing approved poultry are similarly stamped. Carcasses and organs unfit for human consumption are separated and condemned. Altogether, it's estimated that some 2 million pounds of meat and poultry are kept off the market every day, in this manner.

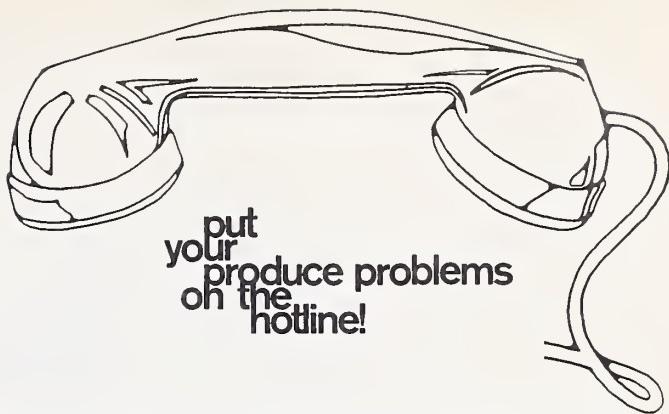
If the meat or poultry is to be processed further—perhaps to go into hot dogs, soup or a frozen turkey dinner—it must undergo reinspection at the processing plant, to see that it is still wholesome and uncontaminated.

During the processing operation, inspectors check sanitation, equipment, and handling just as at the slaughterhouse. They also see that the product is made in accordance with the formula USDA approved before the plant could process that product. Weights, proportions, and cooking procedures are checked carefully. Additional ingredients, such as spices and extenders, also come under the inspector's scrutiny.

There is still further inspection to assure honest packaging and labeling. Every label must carry an accurate name or description of the product, a complete listing of the ingredients, the net weight of the contents, the packer's or distributor's name and address, and the mark of USDA inspection.

The 6,000 Federal inspectors aren't alone in their job of protecting meat and poultry packed and processed by federally inspected plants. Some 1,350 veterinarians are also on hand to see that inspection requirements are met and to make final judgments when diseases or abnormalities are detected. And laboratory technicians, compliance officers, and home economists lend support to the effort, too. □

The author is Assistant Deputy Administrator, Consumer Protection, C&MS, USDA.



put
your
produce problems
on the
hotline!

By John J. Dimond

LISTEN, I'VE GOT a load of produce that is in trouble and I need help."

More than 10,000 such calls for help are received each year by specialists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service.

These marketing specialists are fully familiar with the provisions of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act and the intricacies of produce business transactions. On special telephone lines they stand ready to assist growers, shippers, brokers and dealers with their marketing problems.

The PAC Act is a fair trading law for the produce industry. It provides legal machinery for settling disputes which may arise when produce traders disagree on contracts.

In the produce industry, business deals are often made between people who have never met face to face and who live and work hundreds, or even thousands, of miles apart. Many of these transactions are arranged by telephone and are loose and informal agreements.

In the fast-moving produce industry, highly perishable produce has to be kept moving rapidly. In their haste to get fresh fruits and vegetables to consumers as quickly as possible, produce men sometimes make mistakes, and misunderstandings often arise. Occasionally an unscrupulous seller or buyer will attempt to take unfair advantage of other members of the industry.

Most people in the produce industry would prefer to settle their disputes out of court and go on with their business deals. So, whenever a dispute arises, produce men call the "PACA hotline."

The "PACA hotline" is a special long-distance telephone line answered only by USDA specialists qualified to

give advice and opinions on produce transactions.

The men who answer these calls have years of experience in interpreting the PAC Act and regulations, and in dealing with the produce industry. They can only give informal advice and opinions, but their opinions are based on precedent decisions of USDA's Judicial Officer and will usually be upheld if a problem has to be settled by formal proceedings.

Wilson Miller is Officer-in-Charge of the Chicago Regulatory Branch office—telephone: (Area Code 312) 922-0328. Located at the crossroads of the Nation, between the lush production areas of the West and the bustling metropolitan areas of the East, he is known in the industry as the man who can quickly solve produce trading problems in the Midwestern states.

Gene Carlucci—(212) 732-3193—recently promoted to Officer-in-Charge of the New York office, has many years of experience in this work. He handles the complaints and disputes generated in supplying fresh fruits and vegetables to America's largest city, the nine Middle Atlantic States and New England.

Dick Charron is the Officer-in-Charge of the Los Angeles office—(213) 628-7766. With broad experience in both receiving markets and growing areas, he handles transactions from the important production areas of the Western States.

In Fort Worth, Texas, Officer-in-Charge Joe Ward answers the "hotline"—(817) 335-1630. He knows the business and speaks the language of produce men in the eight Southwestern States.

In Washington, D.C., Gordon Barnes and Mike Price—(202) 737-4118—combine their years of experience not only to answer questions

from members of the produce industry, but also to advise and counsel the men in PACA regional offices.

All of these men can give quick, fair, and impartial advice on how to settle disputes.

Whenever the PACA man gets a call, he carefully learns all the details of the transaction. He must know the type of contract involved, the commodity, the price, the dates of shipment and arrival, and marketing conditions.

He also must know the results of inspections obtained and many other details before he can determine the rights and liabilities of the parties. If the matter is complicated, he may have to call the broker and the buyer before he can express an opinion.

Armed with all the facts, he can usually come up with a practical and workable solution based on his knowledge of legal aspects and marketing practices.

Produce men appreciate, respect and usually abide by the informal opinion expressed by the PACA specialists. In this way their problems can be solved amicably in a matter of hours, rather than the days, weeks, or even months that it would take under formal proceedings.

Many experienced produce men are personally acquainted with the PACA men and have confidence in their ability to settle disputes fairly. They have many opportunities to meet and talk with the PACA men at shipping points, terminal markets and at trade meetings.

Growers, shippers, brokers, dealers and retailers know they can get good advice and opinions when they call the "PACA hotline." □

The author is Chief, Regulatory Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, C&MS, USDA.

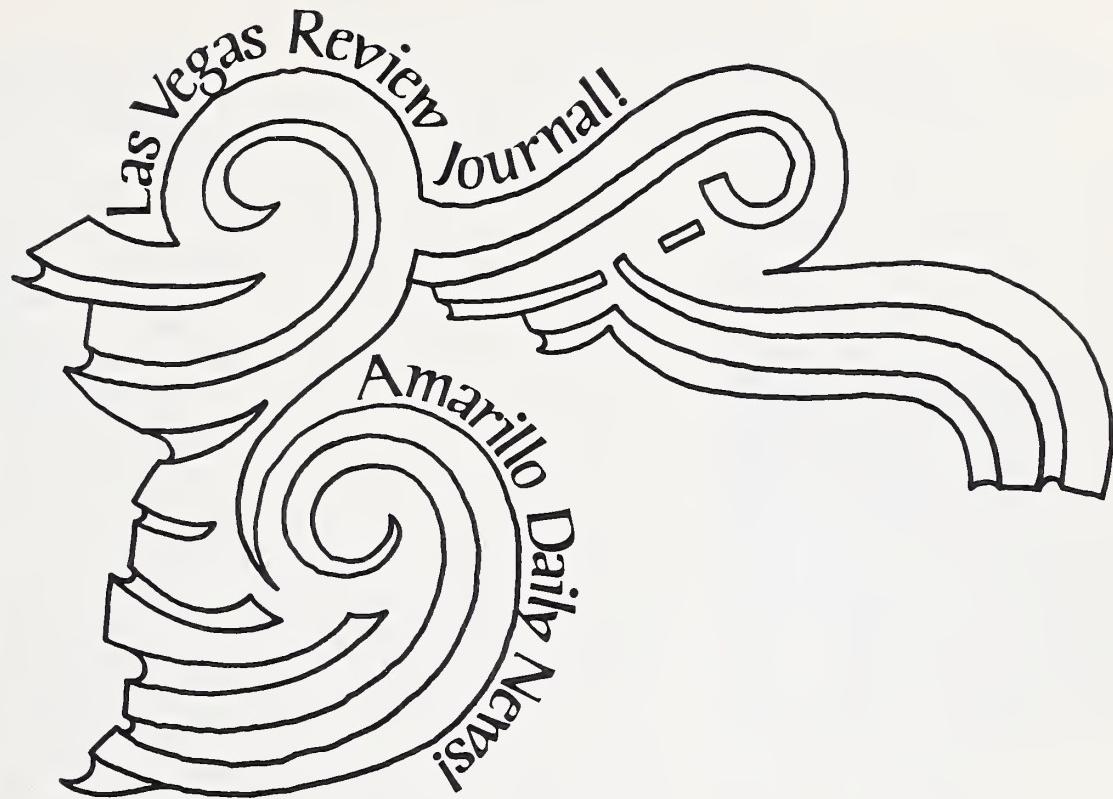
Winston - Salem Journal



Standard-Times! Western Livestock Journal

San Angelo





the swinging specialist

MISS SANDRA BROOKOVER "swings" from coast to coast in one of the most upbeat consumer efforts of the time. Sandy is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's consumer meat specialist. She crusades across the Nation flying high the banner of her cause — USDA grades as consumer guidelines in meat buying. Hers is a media-encompassing routine of personal appearances, interviews, and articles that defies the impersonality of mass communication and a flight schedule that rivals the pace of the jet set.

USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service is now offering Sandy's message to a nationwide TV audience.

Four brief TV programs featuring Sandy discussing "How to Buy Meat" have recently been released and are available to television stations. The stations may run the tapes as a "How

to Buy Meat" series or broadcast each individually. The four programs are: "The Quality of Meat You Buy"; "Buying and Preparing Beef Roasts"; "Buying and Preparing Beef Steaks"; and "Buying Meat for the Freezer."

In the programs, Sandy guides the viewer through the Brookover kitchen and prepares a beef rib roast on-screen to demonstrate the proper method of cookery. She also stresses information of current consumer concern—economy. Less tender cuts of meat, she says, can be tasty budget-balancers.

Television stations may borrow the tapes for a 2-week period by writing to: Radio-TV Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250, and listing first, second, and third choice of dates. Please use your ZIP code. □

MMF

New Handbook Guides Volunteers

PEOPLE WHO WANT to volunteer to help children through community services will be interested in the new "Handbook for Volunteers in the Child Nutrition Programs." It is published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service.

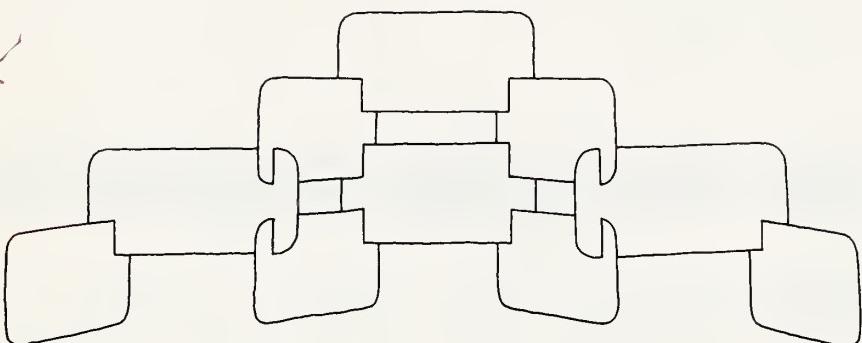
This 20-page, photo-illustrated booklet suggests ways in which volunteer workers may be instrumental in establishing or improving a food service program for children in their communities.

Included are ways a volunteer can work with and stimulate interest among community groups, ways to start a volunteer program, and some jobs that may lend themselves to volunteer work. It also lists key people to contact in the food service programs.

The publication outlines the volunteer's role in different sections: "Parent and Community Support," "Funds and Facilities," "Direct Help," "Student Participation," and "Special Help for Out-of-School Programs." Each section includes examples of volunteer activities in different parts of the country.

The new booklet is the third in a series. The other two publications, "Handbook for Volunteers in the Food Stamp Program," FNS-1, and "Handbook for Volunteers in the Commodity Distribution Program," FNS-2, have been published and are being used.

The new handbook gives a brief description of each USDA child nutrition program and lists the address of the Food and Nutrition Regional Offices. Copies of "Handbook for Volunteers in the Child Nutrition Programs," FNS-10, are free from the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. FNS-1 and FNS-2 are also available from FNS in Washington, or from any FNS Regional Office. □



Food Exhibit to TOP Your Table

"END HUNGER! YOU CAN Help," the U.S. Department of Agriculture's new table top exhibit, has colorful panels on various food programs made available by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. Using illustrations and words, the small, lightweight, and compact exhibit tells about the School Lunch, Donated Foods, Supplemental Foods, Food Stamp, School Breakfast, and Food For Children programs.

Exhibits have always been a part of the way USDA informs the public on the food programs. But because of their size and rising transportation and set-up charges, large exhibits

have become increasingly too costly to show around the country.

The table top exhibit was developed to alleviate these cost problems. It is also easily transportable and in good demand. Women can handle it with ease. No great amount of labor is needed to set it up. And because of its size, the exhibit can be used in small groups and for demonstrations where not much space is available.

Groups or individuals interested in the FNS table top exhibit should contact the Information Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. □

Moss
Wick

Rutgers Studies Breakfast & Lunch Programs

New Jersey Governor William T. Cahill discusses coordination of research at Rutgers University toward improvement of school feeding programs. Flanking him are (left) Leland G. Merrill Jr., Dean, College of Agriculture and Environmental Science, and Richard E. Lyng, Assistant Secretary, USDA.



FNS tidbits

To satisfy regional food tastes and help do a better job of meeting nutritional needs, USDA has begun supplying all the pinto and red kidney beans CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA and NEW MEXICO want. These beans are the decided favorites of Indian and Mexican-American families. Previously, USDA would fill in with other kinds of dry beans, when more plentiful. But experience has shown that families would cut down their use of beans—an important protein source when their favorite kind wasn't available.

The NEW YORK CITY Department of Social Services held a Spring Fiesta Fair at a Brooklyn Community Center. Eight hundred people came to see food demonstrations and taste baked goods and other dishes made from donated foods, to view a film on the school lunch program, and learn about community services available to them.

Senior Citizens in ATLANTA, Georgia, learn how to use USDA's donated foods. Classes for people from 62 to 85 years are sponsored by Senior Citizens Services of Metropolitan Atlanta, Inc. and the public schools. Donated foods are new for many of those eligible to receive them. Participants learn to make homemade mixes using flour, cornmeal, oats; and

how to use the mixes to best advantage. They learn to use grits, dry egg mix, meats and other commodities in appetizing, nutritious meals.

The VERMONT State Board of Education called for a task force to study why nearly 50 percent of the State's needy children are not taking advantage of school lunch programs. The Task Force, under the direction of the Governor's Committee on Children and Youth, will get facts on the number of children in Vermont who qualify for a free or reduced-priced lunch; why certain school districts are not participating in the program; and the effectiveness of free and reduced-priced standards in participating schools.

Tasting parties are now being held at the County food distribution centers in PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, Virginia. As families arrive to pick up their monthly allotment of food, volunteer workers invite them to sample dishes made from the donated commodities. Developed by Extension home economists Leona Barlow and Sandra Thompson of the Virginia Co-operative Extension Service, the "taste" parties have led to a full scale education program to encourage families receiving commodities to use them to improve the nutritional quality of their diets. □

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY will conduct a 2-year study, financed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the State of New Jersey, to develop more effective school lunch and breakfast programs.

It will be directed by Dr. Paul A. LaChance, Associate Professor of the Department of Food Science at Rutgers.

The contract with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is aimed at providing information to make Federal-State school feeding programs as effective as possible.

The study will include several test feeding operations designed to measure the acceptability of new foods and new combinations of foods, and to design more efficient food delivery systems.

USDA and OEO are each contributing \$150,000 for the study, with the State of New Jersey contributing \$67,900.

The results are expected to improve program operations in many States with conditions similar to those in New Jersey. □



Needy Get Power-Packed Instant!

By Floyd Fenton

INSTANT NONFAT DRY milk fortified with Vitamins A and D is the latest in the list of nutritious foods donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to needy persons.

Nonfat dry milk is no stranger to needy persons and others receiving USDA-donated foods. The product had been distributed in a "non-instant" form by USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service and Food and Nutrition Service for many years.

Some recipients of the product, however, were not too happy with it. Regular nonfat dry milk, they contended, does not mix easily with water and is a poor substitute for more expensive fresh whole milk. For these and similar reasons, not all needy persons receiving the product were using it to the fullest extent.

The fortified instant nonfat dry milk now being distributed mixes instantly with water and is highly stable. In addition, the taste has been improved so that the nonfat dry milk

—when reconstituted—more nearly resembles fresh milk.

Vitamins A and D make the vitamin content comparable to whole milk with Vitamin D added. Vitamin A is found naturally in whole milk.

Instant nonfat dry milk can be stored safely for up to 6 months. Of course, once it is mixed with water it must be treated like fresh milk—refrigerated and used in a few days.

All fortified instant nonfat dry milk purchased by the government must be tested by C&MS' Dairy Division. The requirements are many and they are strict.

For example, the product must be made in a USDA-approved plant which meets exacting requirements for sanitation. All ingredients going into the product must be of good quality.

The entire manufacturing process, moreover, from receipt of raw materials by the plant to the final packaging and storage must be under the continuous inspection of highly trained

Federal inspectors assigned to the plant by C&MS.

In addition, C&MS conducts rigid tests of the product. The requirements for the finished product are based on the U.S. Grade Standard for Instant Nonfat Dry Milk. These tests include: checks for fat content (a maximum of 1½% is permissible); moisture (critical for keeping-quality—a maximum of 4½% is allowed); bacteria count; dispersability (how well the dried product goes into solution); and vitamin content. Also, the package must be airtight.

Manufacture of fortified instant nonfat dry milk in USDA-approved plants, and C&MS's testing program, assure needy people that they are getting a high-quality product that is nutritious, easy to store, and convenient to use. □

The author is Chief, Standardization Branch, Dairy Division, C&MS, USDA.



a flick of a finger dials a menu

WHAT SHOULD I BUY for dinner this week? Every food shopper who faces that question happily seizes on new menu ideas . . . from friends, the daily newspaper, the meals served in a favorite restaurant.

Food shoppers in Buffalo, N.Y., and Ontario Province, Canada, can also freshen up their menu plans through unique services provided by a public utility in Buffalo and the Ontario Food Council in Toronto. Both agencies offer a Dial-A-Menu service and a program of supplying menus by mail.

The menus are based on the

monthly Plentiful Foods List issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service. Thus, shoppers know that the foods are in good supply in stores and are generally at reasonable prices.

The similar programs offered in the two cities didn't just happen by accident. They are the result of ladies looking for new ideas—and exchanging them—to help consumers.

The Buffalo utility's Dial-A-Menu program came first. Mrs. Martha Nichol, Home Service Director for the utility, began the program to help consumers not only plan better menus but also to ease their budgets. That's why she based the menus on USDA's Plentiful Foods.

The Ontario Food Council's program started after Miss Ruth E. Moyle, a Council Food Information Specialist, read about the Dial-A-Menu program in Buffalo in AGRICULTURAL MARKETING (Dec. 1966). She thought it would be a good idea for the Council, an agency of the Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food, to adopt a similar service.

After visiting Mrs. Nichol in Buffalo (a 2-hour drive from Toronto) to obtain facts, figures, and pertinent background information, Miss Moyle instituted a Dial-A-Menu program in Toronto.

The program was promoted through the Council's own radio tape service as well as on Toronto radio stations. The Dial-A-Menu number soon became one of the most popular in town.

But there was one drawback. The service was reaching only Toronto residents and not consumers throughout the Province of Ontario.

Not deterred, Miss Moyle decided to turn the Dial-A-Menu service into a Mail-A-Menu program. To drum up business, the new service was regularly mentioned on the Council's monthly radio tapes, on consumer radio programs, in press releases, and in personal television appearances by the Council's staff.

It was also brought to the public's attention at the Council's booth at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in October 1968. Visitors signed up for the service in great numbers.

A major promotional assist was

given by the large supermarket chains, which offered the menus to customers in their stores.

As a result of all this, Mail-A-Menu eventually reached 15,000 consumers a month by May 1969. In fact, the program soon became too successful for its own good. Budgetary considerations required the Council to cut back on the frequency of its mailing and on all active promotion.

However, the service is currently providing 7,000 persons with much more information than ever before, on a monthly basis. In a recent mail poll, they expressed their continued interest in receiving such information.

"This is one of our most active projects, and certainly one of our most valuable contacts with Ontario consumers," commented Miss Elizabeth Williams, who took over for Miss Moyle when she retired in June 1969.

And back in Buffalo? As a result of the Council's mail service, Mrs. Nichol got the idea of starting a somewhat similar program called "Foods and Things."

Under this service, subscribers are placed on a mailing list by purchasing a loose-leaf binder from the utility. Each month they receive menu materials to be inserted in one of the sections of the binder. The book is designed to serve as a kitchen reference source.

Both the American and Canadian services make use of the materials distributed under C&MS's Plentiful Foods Program, which helps growers market crops in abundant supply, and advises consumers of foods they can expect to be economically priced. In most instances the foods in plentiful supply in this country are also abundant in nearby areas north of the border.

For consumers tired of fixing the same old meals each week, the Buffalo and Toronto menu programs offer some fresh ideas.

The food industry, newspapers, radio, television, and other news media all over the United States also promote plentiful foods each month. Many of them provide menus too, as well as the recipes distributed by the Plentiful Foods Program. □

Volunteers Spark Food Program



Donated food is unloaded at a distribution center (left). Families receive enough food to supply each person with over 30 pounds a month (below). These foods can supply all the family's protein, calcium, thiamine, riboflavin, and substantial amounts of needed iron, plus Vitamins A, C, and D.



V DOA



A recipient reads a recipe printed on a food container (left). A mother and son push their food home in a grocery cart (below).



SPARKED BY AN ORIGINAL idea, four volunteer agencies in San Diego, California, got a food program started. Their plan was to have non-government agencies distribute U.S. Department of Agriculture donated foods.

The agencies involved, the Salvation Army, the Methodist Ministry to the Metropolis (Metro), Neighborhood House Association, and the Greater Parish Ministry of the Presbyterian Church approached the County board of supervisors with their idea. Simply stated, they asked the County to deliver the USDA-donated foods to distribution centers set up by volunteers. The agencies would then get the food to the people who needed it.

After the County gave its approval, administrative offices were formed in the San Diego County Welfare Department and tasks were decided upon. The volunteer agencies would help the Welfare Department get people certified through an outreach effort and distribute the food. USDA would provide the food and guidelines for the program.

Preparations began some months

before the first food was delivered. An appeal for volunteer workers and equipment was sent out through the cooperating agencies. Over 600 residents responded, and the County set up a required 4-hour training session for all volunteers.

Private citizens donated refrigerators so that some of the neighborhood distribution centers could store butter or margarine on distribution days.

The County worked closely with the volunteer groups while coordinating the entire operation. During the early months of the program, some County welfare employees volunteered their lunch hours to give distribution-day volunteers time for their midday meals.

Now some of the cooperating agencies have hired full and part-time employees from low-income groups to further improve the operation.

The program opened in March, 1969, and now serves some 50,000 people, or about 17,000 families. There are at present 14 distribution centers operated by 10 different agencies and private volunteer groups in San Diego County. □

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COVER STORY

Test your knowledge of canned and frozen vegetables by taking a quiz. See page 2.

CLIFFORD M. HARDIN
Secretary of Agriculture

ROY W. LENNARTSON, Administrator
Consumer and Marketing Service

EDWARD J. HEKMAN, Administrator
Food and Nutrition Service

Editor, Bonnie W. Pok
Editorial Assistant, M. Jane Phillips

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